

THE CENSUS OFFICE AGAIN.

Colored Clerks not Discriminated
Against Mr Campbell Makes
An Analysis and Sustains
Director Merriam.

Editor of The Colored American—
Dear Sir: A number of articles have appeared recently in the columns of your paper indicating that Governor Merriam, Director of the Census, is discriminating against the colored race in reducing his force; that charges of inefficiency have been unjustly brought against colored clerks and that promises have been made to members of Congress for their retention, but that these promises are violated as soon as the members' backs are turned. I am in a position to know that these statements are untrue and unjust to the Director of Census, and I do not believe that they should go unchallenged. He is confronted with many difficult problems in connection with the reduction of the force, but I think the records will show that he has solved these conscientiously and without prejudice to any class of people. There is nothing in his past career as a public man which sustains such a charge.

On the contrary, he has shown every evidence of his desire to give due recognition to the colored race. It will be recalled that in the allotment of appointments which was made at the time Director Merriam organized the office, he was not unmindful of the requests and rights of our people. He even departed at times from his strict observance of the plan of apportionment in order to give them employment. Such leaders of our race as Washington, Lyons, White, Chase, Cooper and others were permitted to name appointments, and these were retained in all cases so long as the status of the work justified it. You must be aware of the fact that the work of the Census Office is about completed. The reduction of the force is the inevitable result in selecting those who are to remain in the permanent office, it is but natural that Governor Merriam should be desirous of securing the services of those whose record, indicate that they are best fitted to perform the permanent work.

It will be found upon investigation that in reducing the force from thirty-five hundred to its present small proportions, the colored employees who have been dropped are not out of proportion in number to the whites. I know of several instances in which colored employees whose records have not been up to the standard, have been given a second trial in order to avoid the possibility of injustice to them. The Director has uniformly insisted that the colored employees be given equal salaries for like services, and that no discrimination should be made as to the character of the work to which they are assigned, if competent to perform it. He has even been criticised in some instances for dropping the white employees and permitting colored ones to remain in the office. The great difficulty about the whole matter is that there is a tendency among some of us to imagine, without just cause, that we are being discriminated against on account of color, and to charge many of our shortcomings and misfortunes to the mistaken idea of race discrimination.

I say unhesitatingly that Governor Merriam is our friend, and he has shown it in his administration of his duties as Director of the Census. It would therefore be not only unwise but

unjust for us to join in a movement suggested to oppose his reappointment as Director. On the contrary, it would be creditable to us as well as to our interests, to render all assistance possible in encouraging the President to retain his services at the head of the office over which he has presided in such an able, impartial and satisfactory manner.

JAMES CUBERT CAMPBELL
Washington, D. C.

The Foundation of Character.

Miss Nathalie Lord, writing of Booker T. Washington's school days in the May Southern Workman, says:—

Booker, as we always called him, was just entering upon the second year at Hampton, a Middler in rank, when I began teaching there. I was much interested in him from the first. His quiet, unassuming manner, his earnestness of purpose and faithfulness greatly impressed me. I saw in him one whom you could completely trust. He was diligent in his business, making the most of every moment, improving himself in every possible way, and yet unselfish in his thought for others. Because he was having privileges not dreamed of by him a year before, he was desirous that others of his own family and friends should have the same, and he did not rest content until some of them at least had come to Hampton. I think I may safely say he was never idle. To help his people was uppermost in his thoughts.

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